



KEYS TO EFFECTIVE HEALTH PROMOTION



Key #5: Small steps

Why use small steps toward health behavior change?

Small steps give participants immediate feedback on the changes they make towards better health. Measuring these small steps is also an excellent way to collect interim program effectiveness data.

Small steps make a big difference

Small steps for program participants

- Walk to work.
- Use fat free milk instead of whole milk.
- Each day think of two things you are grateful for.
- Do sit-ups while you watch TV.
- Drink water before a meal.
- Take 10 deep breaths to relieve tension.
- Eat half your dessert.
- Skip second helpings and buffets.

Measuring small steps

- Use short pre- and mid-point surveys to ask:
 - How many glasses of water do you drink a day?
 - How often you do eat fast food?
 - How often do you skip a meal?
 - How often do you engage in physical activity?
 - How many servings of fruits and vegetables do you eat each day?
- Use the results to show participants how their health behaviors are changing for the better.
- Ask participants to rate their health status and/or stress levels before and after an intervention.
 - Add up individual (or team) steps and mark the progress on a map towards a far away destination.
 - Be creative! Do not rely *only* on weight loss, BMI, or cholesterol tests as health status progress indicators or health behavior change feedback.

Wise words for taking small steps

- The first wealth is health. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
- We are what we repeatedly do. (Aristotle)
- The victory is not always to the swift, but to those who keep moving. (CDC)
- There are 1440 minutes in every day...schedule 30 of them for physical activity. (CDC)